

The Daily Movie Magazine

CLOSE-UPS of the MOVIE GAME

By HENRY M. NEELY

They Tell Us Why They Are Staying Away

IT HAS been mighty interesting and instructive, during the last week, to read through the many letters sent to this office in answer to the recent article asking readers why they are not attending the movies as they used to do.

Several of the letters, each representative of many that make essentially the same view, are worth reproducing. And yet, as you can see by reading them, there is among the fans almost as wide a divergence of views as there is among the producers and exhibitors themselves.

Only one thing is surprising and that is the preponderance of opinion that the standard of photoplays is not as high now as it has been in the past. Is that strictly true? I confess I am not quite able to make up my mind that it is. It seems to me that the last six months has brought us many genuinely notable plays and I am sure that settings, direction, continuity and average ability of casts are steadily rising.

Yet most of these correspondents disagree with me. They may be right. Enumerating the plays that have influenced my own opinion, I find that the best of them have not yet been seen here. If they had it might make a difference. You will all see them in the fall.

YOU will be interested in some of the typical letters. They come from average fans who are not closely identified with the business and whose perspective is just what the house managers and producers want to get. Do you agree with these writers? Let us hear from you.

FROM Mrs. Samuel C. Day comes a brief and definite statement which expresses the opinion of many. She says:

"The reason why my friends and I no longer go to the cinema as frequently as heretofore is that the prices are too high and, furthermore, the standard of pictures and actors has become so mediocre that I consider it a waste of time to see them. With the exception of four films recently shown—'Passion,' 'Deception,' 'Gypsy Blood' and 'Sentimental Tommy'—the pictures offered have not been worth seeing."

Yet three of these films were German-made and other correspondents blame the Germans for the slump. Mrs. T. J. D., of Midvale avenue, Germantown, writes:

"The reason that I and many other people whom I know do not go to the movies and do not expect to go for some time to come is that the German-made films which are shown almost exclusively in Germantown are repulsive in their coarseness and grossness. For a period of one year our patience has been sorely tried by having these German-made films forced upon us. Our only redress is to remain away from the movies until American-made movies with American actors come into their own again."

"The objectionable films were 'Passion,' made in Berlin; Charlie Chaplin in 'The Immigrant' and 'The Kid,' Geraldine Farrar in a very German film, 'Elsie Ferguson in 'Sacred and Profane Love.'"

"The German comics are worse, if possible, than the more serious ones."

THERE'S a frame of mind that is right in line with what we had to say the other day about this anti-foreign propaganda. It goes to extremes, you see; it overlooks facts and refuses to admit truths.

If Charlie Chaplin's two greatest pictures and Elsie Ferguson's fine screening of a notable stage success were German-made, then I was born in Hindustan and raised in Saghallen.

And I always had an idea that Geraldine Farrar was fairly American, considering that she spent her whole girlhood right here in Philadelphia.

THE star system comes in for definite disapproval from one correspondent—and he proves himself a shrewd observer of recent tendencies in moviedom. There will be many who will agree with him, and one of them is the writer of this column. This correspondent says:

"The movies are not as good in quality as they used to be. Any one who appreciates real acting and pays to see a STAR does not care to see anything else but a good picture with a REAL STAR at the head, and they will never be satisfied with a substitute or NEAR STAR."

"In other words, it seems as if every man or woman who can act just a little better than when they commenced is being classed as a star, and the people pay the price to see what they consider one, and she does not measure up to their idea."

"THAT IS THE REASON PEOPLE DO NOT GO AS BEFORE. They will not be fooled, and they know and feel a real actress when they see one."

"There are lots of mediocre actresses, but very few real stars. The writer takes this occasion to name a few of the real ones: MARY PICKFORD, FARRAR, TALMADGE, NORMA, STEWART, ANITA, NAZIMOVA, FREDERICK, FERGUSON, FAIRBANKS, CHAPLIN, HART, ROBERTS, LITTLE WESLEY BARRY and a few others, and all the rest are NEAR STARS."

"Give us a few more pictures like 'THE MIRACLE MAN,' 'LYING LIPS,' 'MALE AND FEMALE,' etc. We speak of the pictures and not the people in them."

"To the above list of real stars may be added Marguerite Clark and the Japanese actor, Sessue Hayakawa."

"It is very pleasant to occupy a seat in a beautiful theatre, but the picture is the main attraction to one who appreciates good acting."

"The writer has heard more than one person express themselves the same as the above. It is QUALITY that is wanted and NOT beautiful surroundings, with highly-paid orchestras. Give the people REAL STARS and your theatres will be filled as formerly."

THERE are a lot of correspondents who say they object to plays on the social problem and the sex triangle. Yet there are some that have built up the success of great literature and fine drama, despite the fact that there have always been the same number of people to whom the themes are distasteful. It is doubtful whether there are any more films based on them that there have been in the past.

I HAVE saved the best letter for the last. It wasn't sent to me. It was sent directly to the boss. The writer wanted to be sure that it wouldn't be surreptitiously destroyed without his knowing how shamefully he is being film-fanned every day. Its writer, who signs himself T. D. O'B., says:

"Mr. Neely's article in your issue of the 20th is in itself a perfect answer to the question he raises as to why we are not going to the movies."

"It is insincere, mawkish, and evidently written in the belief that the public is too dense to see its insincerity. Mr. Neely speaks of the moving-picture activity as an 'industry' and a 'game.' His letter is in the same vein."

"It has no genuine feeling in it; it has no desire to tell the public the truth; it is deliberate humbug and economically it hopes to get away with the argument that it is the business of the public to provide jobs for anybody who turns up for them. The movies and the movie actors exist; it is the business of the public to keep them in existence."

"What can Mr. Neely expect by the use of humbug of this sort? His 'game' is too thin."

"The whole matter is that the moving-picture 'game' or 'industry' has killed the goose that laid its golden egg. It fell into the hands of buccanniers who use it for their own purposes of increasing their own wealth. They made no attempt to educate the public; in point of fact, they laughed in their faces and pocketed their gains."

SO THERE you're, Geraldine. We've discovered. We can't fool 'em any more. We've been getting away with it for a long time and we've film-fanned the readers and the boss to a fare-you-well.

But no more. T. D. O'B. is on to us. He proves he's a psychologist by penetrating our thin veneer of sincerity. And he shows he's a keen economist by discovering that the producers are in the movie business to make money. Oh, shame! Also horrors! They shouldn't do that. They should be in the business for their health, same as every other business man is.

And now that you've heard these different views, what's the answer? Why aren't you going to the movies as you used to?

WANTED—ONE REAL SITUATION IN PLACE OF 3 SUNSETS

By JEANIE MacPHERSON

Writer of "The Affairs of Cecil" and Other Famous Photoplays for Cecil B. De Mille

"HAVE you a 'bump for drama'?"

That's a question every would-be scenario writer should ask himself. And not one out of a thousand does. That intangible, metaphysical thing that concentrates all of the emotions and situations of a story in the heart of a central character—that's drama. But, oh, how far the beginner misses that ideal!

I spent four hours with a young writer recently, and I told him at the end that I'd gladly trade him three of the best Hawaiian sunsets for one real situation. As a matter of fact, he had a germ of an idea, but it was so buried in the sunsets that he didn't know it was there.

A very large proportion of the people who send up scenarios are decidedly clever individuals. In their stories we find occasional dramatic situations of real merit, a touch of clever psychology, perhaps, deft character drawing and wonderfully colored atmosphere.

But the trouble is the beginner, the

GET PAID TO PLAY IN MUD FOR MOVIES



Movies Changing Faces of American Race

MOTION pictures are changing the faces of American men and women. This is the belief of Henry Clive, well-known artist, who has just completed portraits of a number of famous film stars, including Gloria Swanson, Rebe Daniels, Wallace Reid, Agnes Ayres and Wanda Hawley.

"Motion pictures are making the American face more mobile, more plastic," said Mr. Clive. "Because of the necessity of interpreting thoughts and actions entirely by means of facial expression, film actors have developed faces which register emotions as quickly as the surface of a placid lake records the passage of a summer breeze."

"This is not only true of actors and actresses, but its effect is seen in the faces of millions of movie fans. Gloria Swanson's feminine admirers have acquired all the facial mannerisms which Miss Swanson shows on the screen; Wallace Reid's manner of lifting his eyebrows has set all the young men of the country to lifting their eyebrows, too."

"For years observers, both here and abroad, have declared that the typical American face was rather stern and set. This was true—until the movies came to be such a power and influence. It is true no longer; the American is becoming as facially expressive as the Frenchman or the Italian."

The Darlings of the Screen

Grace Darmond, who will play a leading role in John M. Stahl's next picture at the Louis B. Mayer studio, is having trouble with her mail.

Owing to the similarity of names Miss Darmond has recently received mail intended for Grace Darling, Helen Durling and Ida Darling, all of them sister photoplayers.

Miss Darmond believes the script of the next Stahl production, which was mailed to her at her home, 7216 Franklin avenue, Los Angeles, has also gone astray, because to date she has not received it.

Pauline Stark Plays New Part

With the completion of the cast for "Flower of the North," Vitagraph has begun the production of this special based on the novel of the same name by James Oliver Curwood. Henry B. Walthall, who played the leading role in "The Birth of a Nation" and other big productions, will have the leading male role, and Pauline Stark, who portrayed the title role in "The Courage of Marge O'Doone," another of the Curwood stories, will appear opposite Mr. Walthall.

Editing "The Son of Wallingford"

"The Son of Wallingford" is nearing its final editing and titling. The work is being done at Vitagraph's Brooklyn studios by Mr. and Mrs. George Randolph Chester, who wrote the story and who directed the making of the screen version at the West Coast studios.

COMMANDED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE QUEEN—ON A SCREEN



Three Hours Getting Made Up

For the part of the mother which she plays in the Rupert Hughes photoplay, "The Old Nest," Mary Alden said it took her three hours to put on her make-up.

Royalty is becoming very interested

in motion pictures, according to Eve Unsell, who has just returned from London to take charge of the West Coast scenario department for R-C Pictures Corporation. Something new has arisen in the way of "command" performances at the palace—for pictures. Dwaner Queen Alexandra is particularly devoted to them and has felt it keenly because her physicians have advised her to rest and not to see photoplays for a time for the sake of her eyes. She has given her special representative a list of her favorites, who are Mary Pickford, Pauline Frederick and the Gish sisters.

GOLDWYN BRINGS RIDER HAGGARD'S "BEATRICE" TO U. S.

A THIRD "foreign" film has been acquired for distribution in America by Goldwyn. Although made in Italy, the picture was directed by Herbert Brenon, one of the best known and most experienced of American producers, and its star is one of America's most popular screen and stage players, Marie Doro.

The picture is "Beatrice," an adaptation of Rider Haggard's romantic story of the rocky coast of Wales. Mr. Brenon directed it for the Unione Cinematografica Italiana de Roma. Photographic was done at the picturesque Italian city of Harnone and many superbly beautiful backgrounds were caught by the camera.

"Beatrice" is one of Rider Haggard's popular romances, widely read both in this country and in England. It has a strong love story, with good dramatic situations, built about the love triangle, but with all of Rider Haggard's fertility of invention and power of characterization.

HE SHOWED me a statue of his modeling which I remembered quite distinctly. This was the bust of Lon Chaney used in "The Penalty."

Claire Adams, as the heroine, was supposed to model it before your eyes, with Mr. Chaney as her sitter. They managed this by covering the completed statue with clay and then having her remove it gradually as the picture progressed.

Mr. Schreiber models the original copy and the workmen, of whom there are five working night and day during a busy time, cast from its mold. Between rush jobs, the number of workmen is reduced to two, and their time is occupied with making pieces for which there is general need.

The Mud Shop is never idle, and studio officials say that the money expended in keeping it up is more than repaid by the efficiency of Mr. Schreiber's management, and the historical and artistic accuracy of his reproductions.

Not only do these artisans make statuary, but plaster bottles are made for comedians to be hit with

WHAT would you think of a Goldwyn studio official told you he was going to take you to the Mud Shop? So did I. But curiosity overcoming my fear for his sanity, I trotted close behind him as he led the way through devious paths—and if you've ever been in a large motion picture plant, you know they are that—to a sort of back affair, which eventually proved to be one of the most interesting places I have ever visited.

Briefly, it is the shop in which are modeled, in specially made plaster called magnastar, all the wall plaques, statues, vases, and most of the dishes used in Goldwyn productions.

Here, too, are made what is called in studio parlance, "breakaway" dishes and bottles.

To illustrate personally, one of our party, the representative of "variety," grasped a wicked-looking beer bottle by the neck and brought it down on my head. I should like to hope the horrid act was prompted by professional jealousy, but in that moment I thought of nothing but my sins, and expected the worst.

But nothing happened. The pieces

CHAPTER XXXI July 21st.

Well, blank paper, must my poor pen trudge on? Yes, it must trudge on!

"Oh! Oh!" I gave a sigh that was hardly more than a breath. "My husband—Oh!"

I turned, reeling. I supported myself with the curtains. Then I looked at Mr. Morey for approval.

"Hold it!" he cried. "Keep that expression if you can!"

He was greatly excited.

The studio where H— ruled was a little outside the city; a blessed relief from the dust and noise and overpowering stoniness of the streets. I had no sooner entered it than I had the feeling that I had come to brightness, and business, and joy. There was something clean and big about the place, too. It had been especially built for the taking of pictures, and its main floor was under an immense sloping glass roof that flooded the whole place with light.

But better than all else was the homelike atmosphere; the sense of harmony that existed between the players and the directors, and even the wardrobe hands. I saw at once how different the manners were as compared with the X— Studio. At the former there was roughness and a certain crudeness and bitterness. But here there was a certain comradeship, a certain peaceful quiet, a certain sense of earnest work.

The telephone girl sent me right in, without any delay, under the big glass roof.

A number of "sets" were standing across the west floor. The carpenters and painters and property-men all seemed to be very busy. Here and there lounged groups of actors and actresses, in their various costumes, ready to "go on." It was a bright and busy scene, full of animation and interest. I felt on the instant that I had "come home."

It was sitting at a little table before a set which represented the interior of a telegraph office of a railway station. He was giving some directions to one of the property-men. He was saying that he wanted real glass in the windows, in order that it might be shattered later on. I learned later that he always gave the greatest attention to the most minute details. I never saw a man more absorbed in his work. I stood, unnoticed, at his side for some time, not caring to disturb him, greatly interested in watching him, and noting his methods.

At last he turned and saw me. He looked a little weary; but he smiled. "Oh, good-morning," he said pleasantly, rising to shake hands. "I didn't know that you had come."

"Monday morning," he went on with a sigh. "Everything at sixes and sevens, of course. But I'd see what there is for you. In the meantime, let me introduce you to the others."

To Be Continued Tomorrow

MUD SHOP MAKES "ART TREASURES" FOR STUDIO USE

By CONSTANCE PALMER

Hollywood, Calif.

The LOVE STORY of a MOVIE STAR

This Is How the Story Begins:

NELLA MORELAND, most famous of screen stars, hears that a young girl, Annette Wilkins, has fallen in love with Roland Welles, an idol of the screen. Miss Moreland, to save Annette, writes the story of her own tragic love affair with Welles, intending to send it to Annette so she may know the kind of man he is.

She tells how, while a pianist in a movie theater in Western Pennsylvania town, she met Welles when he made a "personal appearance" there, how he invited her to come to New York and said he would place her in the movies, how she came and the chilly reception which he gave her in the studio. Then, becoming interested in her, he got her job in a small town stock company for the experience, promising to see her often.

The manager insults her and she leaves, finally getting into pictures in New York. Here she works with Welles. He makes love to her, proffers her a deliciously happy life, but she is deliriously happy until another woman reveals Welles' perfidy. Then she quits him and the company.

Now Go On With the Story

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Edna Murphy and Johnnie Walker have finished work in "Play Square," their second co-starring vehicle for Fox. Work on their next picture "Driftin'" has been started

NEW FOX STAR STARTS SECOND PICTURE

BETTY COMPTON tells how, when she began film work, the very first picture she made was based upon her experience in getting the engagement. The producer, who was making comedies, saw her in the theatre doing a vaudeville act. He sent a note to say he would like to have her call at the studio. She went and had a test made. She went again for a second test and then she got the job.

"It was quite thrilling," laughs Miss Compton, "to go through all this at the studio. They find a theatre scene that looked just like the one I worked in; the picture was called 'Wanted: A Leading Lady.'"

Bonnie Lass—Your letter asking for the name of the picture in which Alice Terry will be featured came in this morning. Her next picture will be "The Conquering Power," an adaptation of Balzac's "Eugenie Grandet." But more interesting than the name of her new picture is the fact that she has announced her engagement to her director, Rex Ingram. Miss Terry was little known in pictures until her important role in the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse." Her performance left nothing to be desired. It was during the work on this picture, under the direction of Mr. Ingram, that the romance began.

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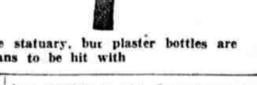
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Main Street—The burglar in "Nineteen and Phyllis" was played by De Witte C. Jennings. Clara Horton was the village belle. Pat O'Malley portrays the good-looking Lieutenant Brant in "Bob Hampton Placer."

Orange—May McAvoy is twenty years old. Of course you are crazy about her. Who isn't? Her first starring picture was "A Private Scandal." She will soon be seen in a "kid" part in "A Virginia Courtship."

Little One—No, child, not every screen celebrity goes in for golf, tennis, swimming and the various other outdoor sports. Occasionally some star actually admits to knowing nothing about them. But it is a fact that outdoor sports are exceedingly popular with both men and women in the motion picture world. Betty Ross Clarke plays opposite Harry Carey in "Tartaners." Yes, Charles Ray was both the star and director in "Scrap Iron."

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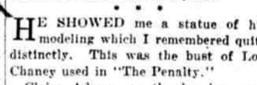
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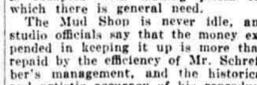
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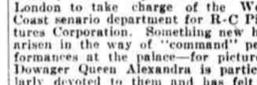
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